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Innocence



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Chapter 1 by 20hupj

I watch the meadow sway with the gentle breeze, the greens and browns washing together. The colors are ripe as if they have just sprung off the artists palette and the scene is as mesmerizing as a photo shoot. The birds and bees flutter around in harmony, the whole meadow as one. Everything fits together like a puzzle, from the smallest patch of earth to the butterflies that spread there wings over the sky.

Why does war have to take away the most beautiful, innocent things first?

Chapter 2 by Bailey Hever



I stand there motionless, my blue dress swaying in the wind. I look to the hill, waiting for him. The meadow is calm, it has always been calm, and up until now, I have been calm with it. But ever since the war had started, that wretched, awful, horrendous thing, calm couldn't have been more wrong. The storms haven't come here yet, and he promised they never would. But I'm scared. I told him,

"Don't go away, please don't. The storms, they'll come if you leave. Oh please, you won't go away, will you?" I asked him, tugging fiercely on his arm. He had only chuckled a little and pulled

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"Goodbye munchkin," he said, kneeling down to meet my eyes. His blue ocean colored eyes stared into my nighttime sky ones, searching my face for guidance on what to say to a seven year old. "I'll be back soon. I promise," he whispered, kissing my forehead lightly. I nodded, unaware of everything except him._

I promise. His words echo in my head like bells on Christmas day. Just like that Christmas day, two years ago, when he left. I let a single tear roll down my cheek before I bite my tongue to stop from crying. Nine year olds do not cry. *But wars don't take away who you love, do they?* The thought resounds in my head, like a distant voice, separated by crashing waves on a stormy day. Like everyday. It might be sunny, and it might be peaceful here in the meadow, and in our cottage, but it wasn't sunny in the rest of the world, like I once had thought. I was so naive back then. The storms will come, and I'll be ready. Ready for change, ready for despair. It's not like I've never experienced despair. Despair had cut a *him* shaped hole in my heart, and had filled it with longing. I turn away from the hill, the hill so close, and yet so far off. I take a deep breath and sink to the ground. *He's not coming back*, I tell myself.

He is not coming back.

Chapter 3 by PyromaniacSoap



My mother tells me over and over as she hears me cry myself to sleep every night, _"It's alright, He's gonna come back." she whispers this in my ear night after night, and each time I hear her leave and cry in the hallway. I've heard her from the next room, sobbing over and over, _"Why? Why did you go?"

_The storms came. They pounded hard on my heart and soul, their integrity slowly fading. The air raids, coming day after day, shutting my mother and I into our small, closet-like basement. Waiting for the consistent booming to stop just so I could go upstairs to cry a little more and remember what daddy said...

-

_ "I'll be back soon."

Chapter 4 by thelastunicorn



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I knew that he wouldn't come back. I just wanted him to stay.

Chapter 5 by thelastunicorn



I know that Mother wants to be optimistic, but I know he isn't coming back. Finally, I had enough of Mother's optimism.

"Mother," I yelled at her, "He won't come back!"

"Now Brooklyn-" she began.

"No Mother! Give it up! Daddy won't come back and I don't even know why he left! He's dead! He just couldn't keep his promise." I screamed. Then I stormed into my room and slammed the door.

A few hours later Mother knocked on my door.

"Brooklyn," she stuttered on the next words, "I'm going to tell you why your father left."

Chapter 6 by Garlic Bread



"We had to go to war. We never wanted this but the other countries didn't want to hear it...they didn't want any treaties or peace or trade agreements. They just want war."

"But why?" I couldn't help but yell out. "Why can't we all just get along!?"

"We have land and resources that they want, and they don't want to give us anything for it. That's how the world is, people want and want. It's just some are more willing to do anything to get whatever they want more than others."

I just couldn't believe it. That people can be this cruel. Everything would be so much better if we just get together instead of always trying to be apart.

"Then the draft happened. Although your father never signed up for military duty they still took

him anyways. They needed as many people as possible to help fight for the country," she said as she stifled back tears. "It's not like I don't take kindly to that."

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"I don't know sweetie.....I just don't know."

I don't know how long I was crying for but it seemed like hours. I lost him because of people being selfish.

I just want him to come back to me...

Chapter 7 by Rainyday



Later in the evening I awoke to a soft rap on my door, my mother in all her conventional beauty and conservative Stepford manner of dress nervously looked down as she smoothed out the invisible creases in her skirt. She looked uncharacteristically awkward in trying to find the right words. She sat down stiffly on the edge of my neat pink bed then posed in a motherly fashion. Opened her mouth to speak "Your Father wanted nothing more than to stay here with you and I Brooklyn, It's important that you know that." she was looking back down smoothing her skirt again. "In truth he had no choice--"

"I know, I know--"

"No Brooklyn. You don't know." My mother said softly in a quick manner that stopped me mid-sentence. I knew this to be something I wanted to hear. I clamped my mouth tightly closed and held my breathe. "I am sorry for not telling you this earlier. But it is difficult to look into the face of my beautiful young daughter and bring her so much pain in the form of a couple of sentences. I- I feel as though by giving you this information I am taking something very valuable from you." She sighed, head tilted looking at me with furrowed brows. "I feel as though I am robbing you of your youth, but I feel there is little time---"

The Long menacing cry of the villages Alarm sounded loudly from the fire station down the street warning us to hide like the rats we have become in our little safe dark hole. We waited there in silence. No air planes or bombs dropping on innocent civilian homes could be heard. The quiet before the storm I thought to myself with a sick feeling in my upper stomach. The knots tied by dread and curiosity from moments before the sirens still sat unhappily there

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more sinister lurked in the quietness around it. It was the hush over the village that told me this storm held much more danger.

Closer the muffled rise and fall of murmurs became dogs barking. My Mother gasped she was trembling so hard her arms around me caused my vision to shake. She spun me quickly around so I could see her face with tears that now were falling down her cheeks. I had never seen such terror in her eyes before. There is no uglier feeling when you are small than seeing fear in those there to protect you.

She covered my mouth before I let out a long cry. "Shhh now. Listen to me like you never have before brook" She said barely above a whisper. Then turning her head as if she couldn't bare to say the words that came next. She hugged my head to her chest and silently sobbed rocking back and forth. She quickly composed herself and pulled me far enough from her that I could again see her face. She pointed to the side of the staircase above us to a small rectangle cut out of the wall.

"You climb in there and you crawl all the way across towards the light, there you can climb out under the brush. You stay under the brush crawling all the way to the alley there. There is the Manhole right outside our gate by our trash can. Father opened that manhole before he left. I want you to crawl down the ladder inside that manhole, you go the West, the opposite direction that the storm comes in from as fast as you can as far as you can til you think its safe to come up. Your father also put clean water and a couple other supplies somewhere not far from where you will enter.." She sobbed some more The barking now louder as well as some commands and yelling now audible. Her whispered words more urgent" Are you listening to me Brooklyn? Once you come up from the sewer your name is no longer Brooklyn Kline. Your name will be Caty Olstrom. Caty Olstrom DO NOT forget that it's very important. Say it back to me."

"Caty Ol--strum" I repeated obediently. She looked at me as if for the last time. I felt my world grow darker and colder then and there. She hugged me to her chest one last time quietly yet frantically sobbing "That's my girl. Now you keep heading west until you come to alms village. Find Peger Olstrom. He will keep you with him until it is safe" she managed before sobbing

again" You were always such a good girl. Love you Brooklyn"

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Men talking now maybe only one cottage down from us. She heaved me over to the entrance to the crawlspace. I began kicking and sobbing, shaking my head the whole time gripping her arms so tightly I ripped her cashmere sweater. She looked away again wincing as if the sight of me was hurting her so bad she couldn't bare it. She took a deep breath to compose her self this allowed me to calm a bit and relax my grip on her arms.

she pulled her wedding ring from her finger and her heirloom watch that belonged to her Aristocrat grandmother "Take these" she said. "Trade them for what ever you need, but keep them well hidden until then" Then reached to the back of her neck and unclasped her most precious Gold necklace Daddy had gave her before I was born. I stared at her neck realizing I never once in all my life had seen her neck with out it before. "Keep this for as long as you can". There was now what sounded to be men rattling the gate at the bottom of our driveway, demanding to come in. "Go now" She said frantically pushing me into the crawlspace. "And Brook" she said "You daddy did this for you" she cried out too loudly again" It all has been for you."

The shouts outside where louder and sounded more threatening. I couldn't see her face the last time I turned to look at her. My eyes were too full of tears and she had to turn around and straighten her skirt and gain some composure before slowly walking down to the gate with the key. I shook and cried inside so loudly It was deafening to me but from the outside I didn't make a sound. I took a deep breath in the way I watched my mother do then crawled on following her every instruction out from under my home.

Chapter 8 by Rakha Kanz Kautsar



I crawl and crawl. I keep crawling as my tears making a trail down my cheeks. My body seems to follow her instruction as my thought goes astray. I don't even know where I was heading anymore with all this sudden --

I hate storms.

I hate wars.

I hate Mommy and Daddy.

I hate myself for being so

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I know they've done this for me. I know they love me a lot more than the stories Mommy read me every night. I know. I know Mommy and Daddy hopes me to just be a good "Caty Olstrom". But this is too much for me, Mom, Dad.

My knee had become sore from all this crawling, but I must continue.

the end

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